

At the we currently participate in the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme as it was an opportunity for us to help people within the community with chronic illness to maintain good oral health.

We have seen many patients under the Medicare Scheme and I believe that all of our patients under the scheme have benefited from the service we have provided them.

Our practice is currently in the process of being audited by Medicare regarding our participation in the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme. It has come to our attention that at the beginning of providing services under this scheme, not all of the paperwork complied with the rules set out by Medicare.

This could possibly be due to the fact that we were not provided with adequate information from Medicare on the exact rules we needed to follow until much later into our participation of the scheme.

All of our patients receiving treatment under this scheme were fully aware of the proposed treatment prior to services being provided. In some circumstances the referring GP was not given a copy of the proposed treatment for the patient, but in other circumstances they were informed about the proposed treatment while it was not recorded on the patient's file, but as stated above ALL of our patients were informed about the treatment they were to have done and each of these patients gave verbal consent that the proposed treatment was ok and they were happy to have it done.

Prior to starting treatment on the patient, we ensured that we have a signed referral from the GP with a current referral date.

The audit that our surgery is going through has affected our practice immensely. We are unsure of what the outcome is going to be for our patients and the treatment we have provided from then, and also the outcome the audit will have on the practice financially. We are also concerned for the patients that are still under the Medicare Scheme as to whether or not they will be left in the dark regarding the future of their proposed treatment.

The audit has also put a personal stress on all of the staff members within the clinic as we are uncertain on what will happen once the audit is complete. It is very stressful when we have to provide an answer to our patients' questions regarding the Dental Scheme, will the scheme be stopping? Will we be made to pay for the remainder of the proposed treatment? Will we be given warning if the scheme is stopped? It also makes it very difficult for us as providers and we are unsure if we are able to complete treatment that has already been started under the scheme, at a risk of the scheme being stopped mid treatment.

Leanora Lopresti